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Application No: 10/539,941
Amendment B
Reply to Office action of 04/13/2007

Attorney Docket No: 3926.177

REMARKS

Claims 1-7 and 10-13 are pending in the application. Claims 1-2 and 7 have been amended. Claims 8-9 have been previously cancelled.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1-2 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite.

More specifically, the Examiner has stated that the phrase "and/or" in claim 1, line 8 and claim 7, line 13 renders the claims indefinite, and that claim 2, line 3 is unclear.

Appropriate correction has been made.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-7 and 12-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 as being anticipated by Leuthold et al. (US 5,803,446).

The Examiner has stated that Figs. 4a-4f of Leuthold et al. show adjusting intervals between carrier units in a transport direction. However, it is noted that what Figs. 4a-4f really show is the movement of the gripper 20, not the adjustment of the intervals between carrier units. The distance between the bottom carrier unit 11 and the top carrier unit (no reference number) is fixed.

It is also noted that claims 1 and 7 have been amended to recite adjusting the intervals between the carrier units (16) in the transport direction and adjusting the distance between the

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carrier elements (26) in the direction transverse to the transport direction. Leuthold et al. do not disclose the adjustment of the distance between the carrier elements (26) in the direction transverse to the transport direction.

It is further noted that the Examiner appears to have ignored the feature that the transport direction is obliquely upward and that the carrier elements (26) that project substantially perpendicular to the transport direction (14).

Claims 1 and 7 are, therefore, believed to be patentable over Leuthold et al. and since all of the dependent claims are ultimately dependent on claims 1 or 7, they are believed to be patentable as well.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Leuthold et al. in view of Lawson (US 3,162,292).

The dependent claim 11 is believed to be patentable due to their dependency on claim 7.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be required at any time during the prosecution of this application without specific authorization, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account Number 50-0951.

Favorable consideration and early issuance of the Notice of Allowance are respectfully

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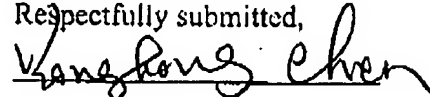
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requested. Should further issues remain prior to allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the indicated telephone number.

Date: July 9, 2007

Respectfully submitted,



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